RTF C13-1

Documentary Film and Video: History and Aesthetics

Fall 97-98
10-12 MWF, Louis 119
Chuck Kleinhans
office: 316 AMS
office hours, 3-5 Mon and by appointment
chuckkle@nwu.edu

Prerequisite: RTF students: completion of all A and B level requirements. Non-majors: RTF B20. Enrollment: 35 max. The course is a prerequisite for C13-2 which takes up more specialized topics (not offered 97-98) and C92, Documentary Production (Kipnis, winter 97-98).

The course provides a survey of documentary film from the prehistory and early origins of film to the present. The student will gain an overview of the history of the form (with emphasis on the English language documentary) and the major aesthetic, political, and ethical questions linked to the practice of documentary. Lectures will introduce major ideas and organize the study which includes readings, in-class and outside screenings, and discussion. In some cases, films or exerpts will be shown with the teacher making comments to draw attention to certain aspects of the work and details of editing, etc. Thus attendance is important and will be factored into the final grade. There will be inclass quizes the 4th week and 8th week, a midterm paper and a final paper. Grad students are required to do additional reading and outside screening. The class will meet on some, but not all Fridays (see schedule), and in one case meet at 9am in order to see a 3 hour film in one screening. The schedule may be slightly adjusted if a visiting filmmaker is available for a presentation.

Several books are required (available at Norris Center Store)

Erik Barnouw, **Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film** , 2nd ed. revised Oxford ISBN 0-19-507898-5

William Rothman, **Documentary Film Classics** (Cambridge U. Press, 1997) ISBN 0-521-45681-9

in addition, grad students are required to read:

Bill Nichols, **Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary**
Indiana University Press ISBN 0-253-34060-8

Additional reading will be on reserve and electronic reserve

Mon Sept 22
course administration
introduction to course
Dry Wood (Les Blank) 37 min. 1973, 16mm, VHS, RTF
Les Raquetteurs (Gilles Groulx and Michel Brault) Canada, 1958, 15 min B&W sound RTF

Wed Sept 24
read: Barnouw pp 1-30, 51-71; grads Nichols ch 1
Issues of documentary and realism
short films, Lumiere Studios 10 min. RTF
Kino Pravda (series, selection. USSR, 1922-25, Dziga Vertov 15 min. RTF
Manhatta Paul Strand and Charles Scheeler, 1921 US 9 min b&W , silent. MoMA
A Propos de Nice (Jean Vigo) 20 min. 1928 VHS RTF

Mon Sept 29
read Barnouw 31-51, 71-81; Rothman 1-20; grads: Nichols ch 2
Present and Past
Fall of the Romanov Dynasty USSR, Esfir Schub, (exerpt) VHS RTF
Nanook of the North (Robert Flaherty, US 1922) RTF

Wed Oct 1
read: grads: Nichols ch. 3.
Socialist/Constructivist City Symphony
The Man With A Movie Camera USSR 70 min. Vertov/Slivova, RTF

Mon Oct 6
Sound 1
read: Jeffrey Ruoff, "Conventions of Sound in Doc'y" (e-reserve) grads: Nichols ch 4
the human voice, interview
Practicing Emptiness (audio doc., 30 min. Soundprint series, wr.. Carmen Belzel, pr. Belzel and Moira Rankin) CK copy
In Plain English (Julia Lesage, 42 min. Video) VHS RTF

Wed Oct 8
read: Barnouw, 83-139; Rothman 21-38.
Sound 2
Las Hurdes [Land Without Bread] (1933, Luis Bunuel, Spain, 27 min. b&w, sound). MoMA
Enthusiasm (Symphony of the Don Basin, Dziga Vertov/Slivova, exerpt CK

Night Mail (d. HarryWatt and Basil Wright, UK 1936, 23 Min B&W RTF

Mon Oct 13
read: grads: Nichols, ch 5
Granton Trawler John Grierson, 11 min. B&W 1934 UK RTF
The River Pare Lorenz, U.S. 1937 32 min b&w RTF
in class exam: on readings, short essay on sound

Wed Oct 15
read: grads: Nichols, ch 6
Documentary as Propaganda 1
Triumph of the Will (Abridged Version) Reifensthal, Germany, 42 min. MoMA

Friday Oct 17******
Documentary as Propaganda 2
read: Waugh, Thomas. "'Men Cannot Act in Front of the Camera in the Presence of Death": Joris Ivens' *The Spanish Earth*." Cineaste 12.2 (1982). (e-reserve)
The Spanish Earth Joris Ivens 1937, 53 min. MoMA
The Heart of Spain, Frontier Films, 1937, 30 min. sound. MoMA

Mon Oct 20
read: grads: Nichols ch 6
Documentary as Propaganda 3
People of the Cumberlands, Sidney Meyers & Jay Leyda, 1938, 21 min. MOMA
Valley Town, Willard Van Dyke, 1940, 35 min. Moma

Wed Oct 22
read: Baranouw 139-172
Documentary as Propaganda 4
Why We Fight: Divide and Conquor d. Frank Capra and Anatole Litvak 58 min. B&W US 1943 RTF

Fri Oct 24
Visiting Filmmaker Alex Rivera (tentative)

Mon Oct 27
read Nichols ch 5
Documentary as Propaganda 5
The Negro Soldier d. Heisler & Capra, US 1944 40 min B&W MoMA
Window Cleaner d. Jules Bucher 6 min. 1945 MoMA
Autobiography of a "Jeep" pr. Joseph Krumgold 10 min. MoMA

Wed Oct 29
read Baranouw 183-212; grads Nichols ch 8
Postwar Realisms 1
In the Street 1952 (d. Helen Leavitt, James Agee), 16 Min. CK
All My Babies (d. George Stoney, 1952 54 min. MoMA

Mon Nov 3
undergrad paper 5pp. On "propaganda" documentaries due
grad paper on Nichols 8 pp.
Postwar Realisms 2
read: Baranouw 172-182, Rothman 39-69; Sobchak, Vivian. "Inscribing Ethical Space: Ten Propositions on Death, Representation and Documentary." Quarterly Review of Film Studies .Fall (1984). (e-reserve)
Night and Fog (Alain Renais, France, 32 min. 1953) RTF video
O Dreamland d. Lindsay Anderson, UK, 1953 14 min B&W RTF
Blood of the Beast (d. Georges Franju, 1949, France) RTF

Wed Nov 5
read Baranow 213-228, 229-253
The Realist Problem Documentary, 1
On the Bowery Lionel Rogosin US 1956 65 min. RTF video

Mon Nov 10
The Realist Problem Documentary, 2
Harvest of Shame (CBS Reports series, US 1960 Edward R. Murrow, Fred W. Friendly, and David Lowe) Lichty

in class exam

Wed Nov 12
read: Baranow 253-293, Hess, John. "Notes on US Radical Film, 1967-80." Jump Cut:Hollywood, Politics and Counter Cinema. Ed. Peter Steven. New York: Praeger, 1985. 134-150. (e-reserve)
The Activist Documentary
Columbia Revolt (NY Newsreel 50 min. B&W 1968) dist. Third World Newsreel (NYC) film

Special Screening
Fri Nov 14 9-12 am
Rothman 69-108, 109-143
Cinema Verite Documentary
Le Joli Mai (Chris Marker) France, 180 Min. RTF video

Mon Nov 17
read: Rothman: 144-210

Celebrity and Documentary 1
Don't Look Back (Pennebaker) RTF video

Wed Nov 19
read : Baranouw, 295-349
Celebrity and Documentary 2
79 Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh (Santiago Alvarez) film (TW Newsreel)

Mon Nov 24
Celebrity and Documentary 3
Lord of the Universe (TVTV) RTF video
read for final exam: (e-reserve)
•Lesage, Julia. "The Political Aesthetics of the Feminist Documentary Film." Quarterly Review of Film Studies .Fall (1978).
•McGarry, Eileen. "Documentary, Realism, and Women's Cinema." Women and Film 2.7 (1975).
•Aufderheide, Patricia. "Public Intimacy: The Development of First-Person Documentary." Afterimage (U.S.) 25.1 (July/August) (1997): 16-18.

final exam (take home) handed out.

Wed Nov 26
Reality TV assortment (CK)
Trick or Drink (Vanalyne Green) RTF video
Gonzo porn assortment (CK)

Mon Dec 1
course evaluation
Return of the Lyrical Documentary
Stations of the Elevated d. Manfred Kircheimer 45 min. MoMA

Wed Dec 3
read Ellis ch 17;
•Williams, Linda. ""Mirrors without Memories--Truth, History, and the New Documentary." Film Quarterly 46.3 (Spring 1993) (1993). (e-reserve)

Deconstructed Documentary
The Thin Blue Line (Errol Morris, US 1988) RTF video

exam: due Wed Dec 10 9am in Chuck's RTF mailbox (212 AMS) and also e-mailed to him.

Undergrad grading. Attendance 10%; quiz 1 10%; quiz 2 10%; midterm paper 30%; final 40%

Grad grading. Attendance 10%; quiz 1: 5%; quiz 2: 5%; midterm paper 25%; final 30%; outside screening/reading journal 15%. Grad students are required to have a short meeting with the prof during the second week of class to set up an individual plan of additional screenings and readings (about one per week) and to keep a journal of ideas raised by that work. This will be due at the midterm and the final.

The following books have been placed on reserve at the University Library and the individual readings will be on electronic reserve.

Alexander, William. Film on the Left: American Documenary Film form 1931 to 1942. Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1981.

Barsam, Richard. Nonfiction Film: A Critical History. rev. ed. ed. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1992.
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Barsam, Richard M., ed. Nonfiction Film: Theory and Critcism. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976.

Boyle, Deirdre. Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Burton, Julianne, ed. The Social Documentary in Latin America. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1990.

Campbell, Russell. Cinema Strikes Back: RAdical Filmmaking in the United States 1930-1942. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982.

Corner, John. The Art of Record: A Critical Introduction to Documentary. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1996.

Ellis, Jack C. The Documentary Idea. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989.

Holmlund, Chris, and Cynthia Fuchs, eds. Between the Sheets, In the Streets: Queer, Lesbian, Gay Documentary. Minneapolis: U of Minnseota Press, 1997.

Jacob, Lewis, ed. The Documentary Tradition. rev. ed. ed. New York: Norton, 1987.

Juhasz, Alexandra. AIDS TV: Identity, Community, and Alternative Video. Durham NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1995.

Mamber, Stephen. Cinema Verite in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1974.

Nichols, Bill. Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Plantinga, Carl. Ordered Images: Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press., 1997.

Rabinowitz, Paula. They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary. London: Verso, 1994.

Renov, Michael, ed. Theorizing Documentary. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Rosenthal, Alan, ed. New Challenges for Documentary. Berkeley: U of CA Press, 1988.

Steven, Peter. Brink of Reality: New Canadian Documentary Film and Video. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993.

Stott, William. Documenatry Representation and Thirties Amrica, 1973.

Warren, Charles, ed. Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film. Hanover NH: Wesleyan/New England, 1996.

Waugh, Thomas, ed. "Show Us LIfe": Towards a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary. Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1984.

Winston, Brian. Claiming the Real: The Documentary Film Revisited. London: British Film Institute, 1995.

The following articles/chapters will be on electronic reserve by the dates indicated:

Monday Sept 29
Jeffrey Rouoff, "Conventions of Sound in Documentry" Cinema Journal #32:3 (Spring 1993) pp 24-40

Mon Oct 13

Waugh, Thomas. “"Men Cannot Act in Front of the Camera in the Prescence of Dealth": Joris Ivens' The Spanish Earth.” Cineaste 12.2 (1982).

Mon Oct 27

Sobchak, Vivian. “Inscribing Ethical Space: Ten Propositions on Death, Representation and Documentary.” Quarterly Review of Film Studies .Fall (1984).

Wed Nov 5

Hess, John. “Notes on US Radical Film, 1967-80.” Jump Cut:Hollywood, Politics and Counter Cinema. Ed. Peter Steven. New York: Praeger, 1985. 134-150.

Wed Nov 19

Lesage, Julia. “The Political Aesthetics of the Feminist Documentary Film.” Quarterly Review of Film Studies .Fall (1978).

McGarry, Eileen. “Documentary, Realism, and Women's Cinema.” Women and Film 2.7 (1975).

Aufderheide, Patricia. “Public Intimacy: The Development of First-Person Documentary.” Afterimage (U.S.) 25.1 (July/August) (1997): 16-18.

Mon Nov 24

Williams, Linda. “"Mirrors without Memories--Truth, History, and the New Documentary.” Film Quarterly 46.3 (Spring 1993) (1993).